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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC PRIORITY 5433
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1653
INFO RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA 4704
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RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 5260

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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

USDA FAS FOR OCRA/KUYPERS; OSTA/HAMILTON, BEAN;
ONA/TING, SALLYARDS
PASS FSIS/HARRIES, DUTROW
PASS APHIS MITCHELL
STATE FOR EUR/RUS
STATE PASS USTR FOR CHATTIN
BRUSSELS PASS APHIS/FERNANDEZ
VIENNA PASS APHIS/TANAKA

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [WTO](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: U.S. POULTRY FACILITIES PUT ON NOTICE
REGARDING CHLORINE

REF: A) HANSEN/DUTROW EMAIL 01/26/09, B) 08
MOSCOW 1826, C) 08 MOSCOW 1947

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: The Russian Federal Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance Service (VPSS) demanded via official letter a list of U.S. poultry facilities that do not use chlorinated anti-microbial washes in poultry production by September 2009. According to the letter a resolution banning the use of chlorine will take effect January 1, 2010. Virtually all U.S. poultry shipments to Russia would be threatened by this action. A scanned copy of the backdated letter and courtesy translation were sent to FSIS on January 26 (REF A). An informal embassy translation of the letter follows. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) BEGIN TEXT:
Moscow, January 23, 2009
No. FS-GK-2/347

Assistant Administrator
Office of International Affairs
USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)
Dr. Ronald K. Jones

The Federal Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance Service (VPSS) extends its regards to USDA/FSIS and informs you of the following.

The date of implementation of Resolution No. 33 announced on June 2, 2008, titled, "On production and circulation of poultry meat", issued by the chief medical officer of the Russian Federation has been postponed until January 1, 2010.

In connection with this, we ask that you provide us by September 2009 a list of U.S. poultry establishments that comply with the above-mentioned resolution banning the use of chlorine-based solutions for treatment of poultry carcasses if the chlorine content exceeds the norms stipulated in SanPiN 2.1.4.1074-01 titled,

"Drinking water. Hygiene requirements to the quality of water in centralized systems of water supply. Quality control." In the future we ask that you only organize routine joint audits from these establishments.

Dr. Jones, let me assure you of my highest esteem.

Deputy Head
G.K. Kovalev
END TEXT.

¶3. (SBU) On June 2, 2008, Russian Chief Medical Officer Gennadiy Onishchenko signed Resolution No. 33 banning the use of chlorinated antimicrobial washes in poultry production as of January 1, 2009 (REF C). This resolution would have effectively blocked all U.S. exports of poultry to Russia since the majority of U.S. facilities use such washes during the chilling process to kill foodborne pathogens before the product reaches consumers' plates (REF B). In December 2008, Onishchenko agreed to postpone implementation of Resolution No. 33 for one full year in conjunction with the separate agreement reached by U.S. and Russian negotiators on poultry exports for 2009.

¶4. (SBU) Resolution No. 33 sets the chlorine maximum residue level (MRL) in poultry production at 0.5 part per million (PPM) which is the same level set for tap water. The new MRL is 100

times more stringent than the current level set in Russian regulations for poultry production. In effect, the resolution bans the common industry practice of using chlorine in antimicrobial washes to kill surface foodborne pathogens such as Salmonella and E. coli. Post contacted the Federal Service for Consumer Protection and Human Well-Being (Rospotrebnadzor) last summer with a request for scientific evidence justifying the need for such action. We were told that no such information would be provided apparently due to the fact that no risk assessment was ever performed.

¶5. (SBU) On December 18, 2008, high level USDA and USTR officials met with Onishchenko and his staff in Moscow to discuss various issues of concern including chlorine. Onishchenko stated that he was open to the idea of having U.S. government scientists meet with his technical experts to share information and discuss the chlorine issue in more detail. Onishchenko hinted at the meeting that Russia did indeed have scientific research to support its stringent MRL standard for chlorine but did not share it at the December 18 meeting. He seemed ready to have technical experts from both governments review the scientific research on chlorine.

¶6. (SBU) COMMENT: We have a window of opportunity to meet with Rospotrebnadzor at the technical level to discuss the science behind using chlorine in poultry production and to gain a better understanding of their health concerns with this process and then to possibly resolve this matter before the ban takes effect next year. Post recommends that USDA and FDA representatives initiate a technical level meeting with Rospotrebnadzor in the nearest future to share information on this issue. END COMMENT.

BEYRLE